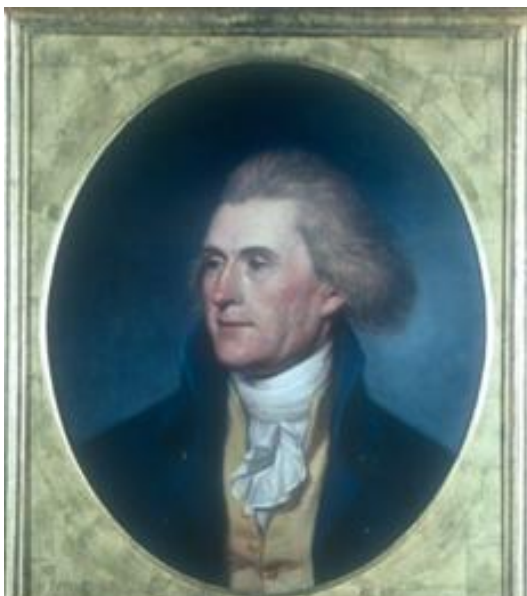




Jefferson's Homework: The Declaration of Independence

Visit our historic sites in the footsteps of Thomas Jefferson and see how he helped form the new nation.



Thomas Jefferson by Charles Willson Peale, from life, 1791-1792. Independence National Historical Park.

To help you have the most enjoyable visit possible, here are a few **helpful hints:**

- First, get a “Building Hours” card with this packet. Several of the sites you will visit have changing hours and are closed on some days.
- Get your **free** timed tickets to Independence Hall. This will help you to better plan out the rest of your day. (Available in the Independence Visitor Center.)
- Be aware that you will have to go through a visual bag check at the entrance of the Liberty Bell and at the corner of 5th and Chestnut Streets for Independence Square. If you do not have a bag you will move quickly through the line.
- Since our sites are located in a busy city, please be extra careful when crossing the streets. Please cross at the corner and watch your step: some of the pavements are uneven, just like they were in the 18th century!
- Some of the structures that you will visit are nearly 300 years old. Please take care to insure that your children’s children will also be able to visit these sites and learn about the life of Thomas Jefferson in the future.

Ready? Let’s go! You’ll begin at **Declaration House**, where Thomas Jefferson lived and worked during the Second Continental Congress in 1775-1776. Head west on Market Street as you exit the Independence Visitor Center.

On the way to *Declaration House*, begin your historical conversation by asking your group:

- What do you already know about Thomas Jefferson?
- Jefferson was born in 1743. About how many years ago was he born?
- Where was Jefferson born? (Jefferson was born in Virginia, and as an adult he lived there with his wife Martha at his home called Monticello, which means “small mountain” in Italian.)
- Mr. Jefferson was sent to Philadelphia to represent Virginia as a *delegate* to the Continental Congress, and was quickly put on several committees. One of those committees was chosen for a very important “homework” assignment.
- Benjamin Franklin was on this same committee but wasn’t feeling well. John Adams was also on this committee, and he convinced Thomas Jefferson to write their homework assignment because people respected Jefferson, he was an excellent writer, and he was from the South. (Virginia had a large population and it had a lot of influence. By having a Virginian draft the Declaration, the Continental Congress ensured valuable support for the document from that colony’s people.) You’ve probably heard of Jefferson’s homework assignment, and you can most likely find it in the back of your social studies textbook. It’s called **The Declaration of Independence**.

Stop #1: Declaration House

7th and Market Streets

- Thomas Jefferson rented rooms here from a bricklayer named Jacob Graff. Jefferson liked this location because it was in a quiet place on the outskirts of the city. How is this location different today than when Jefferson lived here in 1776?
- To be successful in writing his homework assignment, Jefferson needed to clearly state the reasons that the American colonies wanted to break away from Great Britain to form their own nation. While Jefferson's "homework" was surely read by King George III, he had several other audiences, including: Washington's troops in the field, other nations who might become our *allies*, and undecided American colonists. He wanted to write this document in a way that would persuade people to join America's cause. Have you ever had to write a piece of persuasive writing? What were you writing about? What writing tips would you give to Jefferson?
- Thomas Jefferson wrote many drafts, and made over 30 corrections to his own work before he showed it to Mr. Adams and Dr. Franklin. He was not able to use an eraser, White-Out or the Delete button, like you might use today! Congress then made over 80 changes to Jefferson's document. Why were so many changes made to Jefferson's writing, before the Declaration of Independence was accepted and approved by the Continental Congress? How do you think Thomas Jefferson felt while all of the changes were being made to his writing? How do you feel when others make suggestions about how to revise your writing?
- What were some reasons for breaking away from Great Britain that Jefferson listed in the Declaration of Independence? **Look** at a copy of the Declaration. How many times did Jefferson write sentences that began: "He has..."? Who is Jefferson writing about? (King George III)
- If you were a colonist, would you want to stay with Great Britain or break away and become an independent nation? Why or why not?

Stop #2 The Liberty Bell Center

Enter on 6th Street between Market and Chestnut Streets.

(There are no public restrooms available in the building. You may want to use the restrooms on the corner of 5th and Chestnut Sts. or at the visitor center before entering the Liberty Bell Center)

- At Market Street just west of 8th street, Jefferson rented a house owned by Thomas Leiper. Jefferson lived there for several years in the 1790s while he served as the first Secretary of State for President George Washington. What is the Secretary of State's job? Who is our Secretary of State right now?
- Thomas Jefferson heard the ringing of the Liberty Bell many times, but he didn't call it the Liberty Bell. What did he call it? (Jefferson would have called it the State House Bell, because it hung in the Pennsylvania State House, now known as Independence Hall.)
- From how far away do you think the ringing of the Bell could be heard? (The sound of the bell probably carried for about two square miles: from the Schuylkill River to the Delaware River.)
- After 1825, the Bell was often called the Old Bell of Independence. People began asking to go up into the tower and see it. Why did they call it the Bell of Independence? (The Liberty Bell hung in the bell tower of Independence Hall when the Declaration of Independence was declared.)
- In the 1830s, the Liberty Bell was used as a powerful symbol by the *abolitionists* (a group of people who worked to end slavery). Thomas Jefferson owned enslaved Africans in Virginia during his lifetime. Of the dilemma of slavery he wrote, "We have the wolf by the ears, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go." What do you think Jefferson meant by these words?
- Take some time to enjoy the exhibits at the Liberty Bell Center, visit the Bell, and reflect on its importance as a symbol.



Liberty Bell Center Interior. Liberty Bell with Independence Hall in the background. Photograph by Robin Miller, 10/2003. Independence National Historical Park.

Stop #3 Independence Hall

Enter Independence Square on the corner of 5th and Chestnut Streets.

TIMED TICKETS REQUIRED from the Independence Visitor Center. This is a ranger-led program that includes the Assembly Room.

- Thomas Jefferson would have known Independence Hall as the Pennsylvania State House. He was sent here from Virginia to represent his colony at the Second Continental Congress. The delegates were very busy because they were running a war against Great Britain, the most powerful nation in the world. This is where Mr. Jefferson received his homework assignment.
- When you get into the Assembly Room, look on the Virginia Table (close to the rail on the right side of the room). You'll find Mr. Jefferson's walking stick. He didn't need it to help him walk. It was a *status symbol* for wealthy people.
- At the Virginia table, Jefferson sat and listened to the debate over the Declaration. It was frustrating and difficult for him to endure so many changes to his work. (Between the changes that Jefferson made himself and those that others made, over 80 changes were made to his document!)
- During much of the Revolutionary War, Jefferson was not here in Philadelphia, but was serving as the Governor of Virginia.
- What do you think the room may have felt like in July as they argued over the Declaration? Did they have air conditioning to make them feel cooler?
- On what day did the Congress agree to break from Great Britain? (July 2, 1776)
- Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal" but, unfortunately, in 1776 this statement did not apply to women, Africans, or men who did not own land. Many of the delegates to the Continental Congress, including Thomas Jefferson, owned enslaved Africans.
- Jefferson was not here 11 years later when the United States Constitution was written. Where was he? What was he doing there? (He was in Paris representing the United States as our Minister to France.)

BRAINSTORM!!!

Jefferson and Architecture

Architects design buildings and landscape architects design outdoor spaces. Thomas Jefferson was both! Jefferson designed his home and gardens at Monticello. He also designed the buildings and landscape for the University of Virginia. Jefferson influenced the design for the new capital city of Washington, D.C., where he took office as President of the United States in 1801. He learned about the architecture of buildings and landscapes from books, and from his travels in Europe. Jefferson believed that our new country's architecture should reflect our ideals as a nation, and should symbolize our newly gained independence and authority to govern ourselves.

Take a look at the large set of windows on the south side of Independence Hall (facing the square). These are known as Palladian windows, and they are named after Andrea Palladio, who published books on architecture that Jefferson owned and studied.

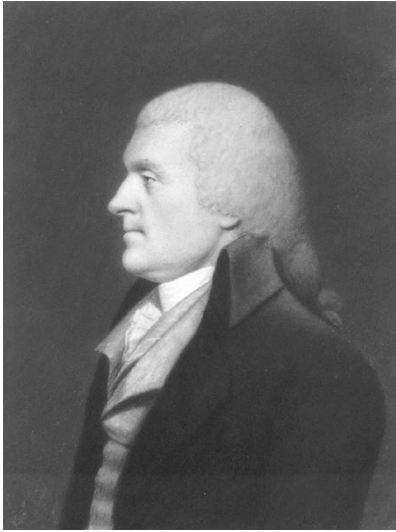
Jefferson took visitors on tours of the grounds at Monticello, where he had planted many types of trees (over 160 species). Two months before he died, he designed an *arboretum* (an area planted with many types of trees for study, display, and preservation) for the University of Virginia. Take a look around you at Independence Square. This landscape was originally planned as an arboretum, and included trees from many of the original thirteen colonies.



Independence Hall Exterior. South facade. Close-up view of the door and windows. Photograph by Robin Miller, 2001. Independence National Historical Park.

Stop #4 Congress Hall
On Independence Square

NO TICKETS REQUIRED
6th and Chestnut Streets



THOMAS JEFFERSON by James Sharples Sr., 1796-7. Collections of Independence National Historical Park.

The new United States Constitution was put to the test in this building. It was time to see if our plan for governing ourselves would really work. Thomas Jefferson worked here on the second floor in the United States Senate beginning in 1797, although he was not a Senator. The first floor is where the House of Representatives made laws before they moved the capital city to Washington, D.C.

- What was Jefferson's job when he worked here? (Jefferson was Vice-President of the United States, and therefore he was also the President of the Senate. Jefferson wrote a book of rules that the Senate still uses today.)
- When did he vote? (Jefferson would only vote if he had to break a tie.)
- How many people work in this part of Congress from your state today? (Every state has two senators. The number of representatives is determined by a state's population.)

"President" Jefferson...

A **president** is the person who holds the top official position in an organization, club, or society. During his time in Philadelphia, Thomas Jefferson was president of the Senate and he was president of the American Philosophical Society (which you will visit next). Eventually, Jefferson would become the third President of the United States from 1801-1809. By this time, the capital had moved to Washington, D.C.

BRAINSTORM!!!

Experience more of Independence Square



If you don't have tickets for Independence Hall, visit the other buildings on Independence Square. Old City Hall and the Great Essentials Exhibit in the West Wing are interesting and historically significant places to visit, and you don't need a ticket to get in! Rangers will be there to talk to you and to answer your questions. **Be sure to see the original printed copy of the Declaration of Independence in the Great Essentials Exhibit. This represents the end result of Jefferson's complex writing process: his published work.**

Stop #5 American Philosophical Society
5th Street between Chestnut and Walnut Streets

Please limit your group to a maximum of 15 people when visiting the exhibits in Philosophical Hall.

Thomas Jefferson was the president of the American Philosophical Society at the same time that he was Vice-President, and later President of the United States. The nation's oldest scholarly society, APS was founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1743 "to promote useful knowledge." Thomas Jefferson attended meetings here at the APS, and presented some of his own scholarly papers about the wonders of nature. Jefferson even had an animal named for him: a ground sloth called **Megalonyx Jeffersoni**! Look for another print of the Declaration. What is it printed on? Do you see Jefferson's silhouette?

Be a History Detective! Look around you, observe, and learn!

Peale's Museum was once located in this building and in Independence Hall. It was run by Mr. Jefferson's dear friend, the famous portrait painter Charles Willson Peale.

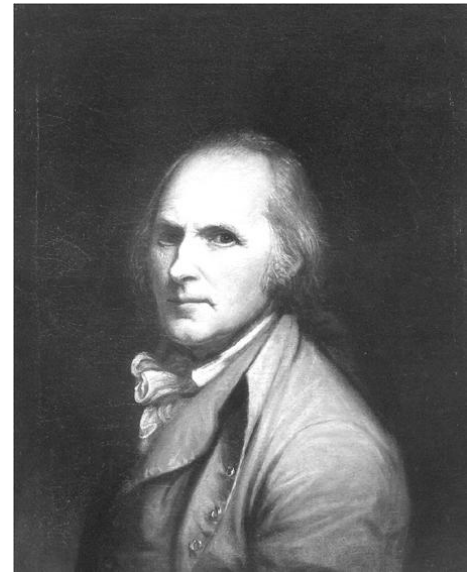
Stop #6 The Second Bank of the United States

Chestnut Street between 4th and 5th Streets

Students need to be very careful when moving through the galleries. Students must be accompanied at all times by a responsible adult.

Inside you will find many original portraits in the *People of Independence* exhibit. Most of them were painted by Charles Willson Peale. (Peale's self portrait is to the right) What else did Peale do in Philadelphia? (Remember Peale's Museum from your visit to the APS?)

Look for the portrait of Thomas Jefferson (it's the same portrait shown on the cover of this packet). It was painted in 1791 or 1792 as Jefferson sat for it. There were no photographs yet. Peale sat in front of Jefferson for several hours in just the right light and painted Jefferson as he saw him.



Charles Willson Peale by Charles Willson Peale, self portrait, c. 1795. Independence National Historical Park

- What was Jefferson's job at the time the painting was made? (Secretary of State)
- How old was Jefferson at the time? (Remember, he was born in 1743.)
- Look at the other portraits on display in the Second Bank. Many of these men knew Jefferson and worked with him in the new government.
- Look for the portraits of Lewis and Clark. Remember the plant specimens from their expedition that you saw at the APS?

BRAINSTORM!!!

Visit Franklin Court

Use the Chestnut St. entrance between 4th and 3rd Streets.



Thomas Jefferson visited Benjamin Franklin several times here at Franklin's home. When the Declaration of Independence was read to the public for the first time on July 8th, 1776, Benjamin Franklin was too ill to attend, so Jefferson made a personal visit to see him. Jefferson also visited him shortly before Franklin's death in 1790.

The Declaration of Independence was printed on a printing press similar to the one located in the printing office at Franklin Court. Stop in and see how printing was done at that time.

Thomas Jefferson was interested in *archeology* throughout his life, and he did several excavations of Indian burial mounds in Virginia. By using a methodical approach and keeping detailed notes when he dug, Jefferson set the stage for the methods used by archeologists today. Can you view any archeological sites in Franklin Court today?



DID YOU KNOW?

Thomas Jefferson died at Monticello on July 4, 1826, on the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson had prepared a sketch containing instructions for his tombstone in which he listed what he considered to be his three greatest achievements. They were: writing the Declaration of Independence, writing the Statue of Virginia for Religious Freedom, and founding the University of Virginia.



Independence Park Institute

We hope you have enjoyed following in Jefferson's footsteps during your visit to Independence National Historical Park! If you would like information about other educational programs visit www.nps.gov/inde or call 215-597-2760.

If you are interested in learning even more about Thomas Jefferson, here are some suggested resources that you may enjoy. As Jefferson wrote: **"I think by far the most important bill in our whole code, is that for the diffusion of knowledge among the people. No other sure foundation can be devised for the preservation of freedom and happiness."**

Web Resources

Biography of Thomas Jefferson

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/tj3.html>

Monticello: The Home of Thomas Jefferson

<http://www.monticello.org/>

The Thomas Jefferson Papers at the Library of Congress

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/mtjhtml/mtjhome.html>

The Thomas Jefferson Memorial

<http://www.nps.gov/thje/>

The Declaration of Independence

http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/dube/inde2.htm

Print Resources

"I cannot live without books." --Thomas Jefferson, in a letter to John Adams, June 1815

Thomas Jefferson: Author of the Declaration of Independence

by Veda Boyd Jones, Arthur M. Schlesinger (Editor)

Thomas Jefferson: A Picture Book Biography

by James Cross Giblin, Michael Dooling (Illustrator)

Childhoods of the Presidents: Thomas Jefferson

by Joseph Ferry

The Hatmaker's Sign: A Story by Benjamin Franklin

by Candace Fleming, Robert Andrew Parker (Illustrator), Benjamin Franklin

Meet Thomas Jefferson

by Patricia A. Pingry, Meredith Johnson (Illustrator)

Thomas Jefferson

by Victoria Sherrow



The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Sept. 2010 (v. 8)